

The Scriptural Background

In both Acts 6 and Exodus 18, we are given God's plan for caring for large numbers of people in the community of faith. When we delegate those responsibilities to just one, or a small staff, we are shown that those who are most vulnerable are most apt to be overlooked in daily life. We desire above all else to bring God glory in all we do. To that end, we are joining together to care for others so our leaders can commit their time to prayer and the study of Scripture. In short, we want to encourage each of us, from our leaders to the newest visitor to grow in their own personal relationship with Christ so that we as a church can consistently grow spiritually. We believe that as we are faithful to serve others God's way, He will be able to trust us with more of His most precious asset; His people.

Geographical Divisions

Circuit Riders are assigned to a list of people connected to our church in a small geographical area. The purpose is to have people who might naturally meet each other during the week to be connected and to encourage connection within our church body.

Name Circuit Riders

In keeping with our tradition, Circuit Riders were the ones who blazed the trail of Methodism across the nation. They brought Wesley class meetings which developed into churches across the nation so quickly that at one point, there were more Methodist churches in the United States than Post Offices. We want to bring that level of contact and caring into our church family. We want our Circuit Riders to be as welcome a sight as a letter from home. In the homes of the frontier, there would be a flame on the hearth during the day and the coals would be stoked at night to keep the embers glowing warm. Our Circuit Riders will not only be blazing the trail for the church, but fanning the flame of the Holy Spirit in each of us so that no (m)ember is out by itself growing cold. Each (m)ember will be surrounded by others keeping the flame of faith glowing brightly

and caring for the least of those in the Kingdom of God as we care for ourselves. As we do this, our church will be in a position where God can bless us as we care for those He has already entrusted to our care.

Discipleship Chair

The Discipleship Chair:

- 1) Coordinates the Circuit Riders
- 2) Cares for the Circuit Rider's needs
- 3) Assigns and equips backup Circuit Riders
- 4) Coordinates with the pastor on continuing needs in the program

Weekly Plan

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| Sunday | Circuit Riders pick up your card as you come in to church
Circuit Riders complete information on those at worship |
| Sun-Wed | Circuit Riders get any remaining information on those not in worship |
| Wed | By close Wed, Circuit Riders cards are due back into church office |
| Thurs. | Office creates new lists with new information for the following week
(including visitor information for the previous Sunday in your area) |
| Thurs./Fri. | Discipleship Coordinator checks on Circuit Riders that don't have information in to the office |

HOW TO GO THROUGH MY LIST

- I. Pick up your weekly list from the box on the receptionist's desk. Be sure to get the one with your name on the top.
- II. Pray for each person on your list. You may want to come a few minutes early to take that time to lift them up in prayer. Ask for God to touch them, draw them close and breathe a fresh word to them. If you know specific needs, ask God to show you how to meet those needs. Pray that their worship experience this week will be rich.

Pray our all-supplying God would touch their deepest needs.

- III. Look for the people on your list in worship. Ask them if there is a prayer need you don't know about. Tell them how good it is to see them. Ask them the question you got from the Discipleship Chair.
- IV. Record their information on your card (not necessarily when they are with you, but before you forget)
- V. Check on the ones on your list that are not in worship this week. If you already know they are out of town, no follow-up is necessary, but if they are ill, list their special need in the appropriate column. You might want to check on them, tell our caring minister that they have a need or ask for special prayer.
- VI. If you have gotten information on someone moving to another church or location or deciding to make this their permanent church home, be sure to check the box when you have notified the membership secretary and dealt with the name tag. (The Administrative Assistant will make new nametags if you give her the proper spelling, including preferred nicknames. They can usually be ready the following Sunday. Old nametags can just be left on the Administrative Assistant's desk.)
- VII. Double check your list to be sure you have done all the follow-up that you can do. When that is done, put a check mark in the last column by that name.
- VIII. When the front of your list is complete, answer the questions on the back. We want to be sure you are also being cared for as you minister to others.
- IX. Return your list to the office, by mail or in person, so that the office has it by close of business Wednesday.

BUT I HAVE QUESTIONS

Who are these new people on my list?

When we have a first time visitor, we hope they have received a mug and the pastor makes every attempt to visit them that same

day. The pastor also sends out a letter welcoming them. The following week, they will show up on one of the Circuit Rider lists. You will get whatever information we have at that juncture. This is the only time we ask you to go visit anyone. If possible, we would like you to be the next contact for them to answer questions about the church. At minimum, we would like you to call them or write a note letting them know about the program and your relationship to it. Tell them you are their personal connection to our church. Encourage them to come again.

What happens when someone on my list no longer goes here?

This is a good thing... we now know how to care for them.

1st Ask where they are currently attending and if they are being blessed. If they are attending regularly, and being blessed, rejoice with them that God is meeting their needs. Ask if it would be helpful for us to remove them from our rolls? Let us know their answer. As soon as they are removed, they will come off of your list.

2nd If they are not attending elsewhere, ask how we can be a blessing to them. Let them know that we are actively looking for ways to take better care of each other. Ask for their help toward that end. Keep them in prayer.

What if someone doesn't want to you contact them each week?

The goal is not to bother people or to harass anyone. Ask how often they would be comfortable being contacted. Let them know that we are trying to honor our commitment to care for them. Honor their request. It might be helpful to ask how often they would like you to check on them and also ask them to promise to call you if a need comes up they have not anticipated.

What happens when someone on your list is going to be gone for some time?

Obviously, you can't contact them every week while they are touring Outer Mongolia. Try to find out when they are expected back and just note on your card when they are expected back.. Note the date each week to remind yourself and then note again when there are changes to their status.

Referrals:

There are so many referrals, we can't possibly list them all. We will continue to update this folder with new information. To begin with, the church office has access to many referrals.

- When people have **physical** needs (rent, utilities, food, etc.) we have some limited amounts of resources. The easiest way is probably to refer them directly to the church office (then note on your card that you made the referral).
- When people have **spiritual** needs, referrals might include everything from the devotional books in the narthex to suggesting an appointment with the pastor. In between, you might consider Sunday School, worship attendance, Wednesday Bible Study, or other classes offered for special needs (grief recovery, personal conflicts, and others), Stephen Ministry or other church programs.
- When people have **emotional** needs, you can usually be a listening ear. You may even be able to put them in touch with someone else in the congregation that would be helpful in their discipleship. Connections to others who are more mature in Christ with similar needs, backgrounds and living situations would be the ideal. Alternatively, we have a wealth of wisdom in our seniors that would be a good resource to tap into for those going through needs that others have already grown through.
- When people have **ministry** needs, try to learn the programs of the church that might address their need to be served. Be sure to ask how they might have needs to be equipped to enter or grow in a ministry and list those under their special needs.

- Sometimes you will find **emergency** situations that are beyond your expertise or realm of experience. Such things would be people who are clinically depressed, a danger to themselves or others, or some other severe, immediate need. Refer these directly and immediately to 911 if there is an imminent threat to life and then to the pastor. Pastor Lois can almost always be reached by cell phone at 301-0307. If you get voice mail, there is a way to leave a numeric message. Entering 911 at the end is the fastest way to get a response.

Prayer referrals:

You may make the call so that it is taken care of in the most efficient way, even if you are making calls at night. Then just mark your list that it is done.

Prayer List in Visitor and bulletin:

Margaret in the church office 673-5858 (at night you can leave a message and we will get it the following day.)

Prayer Pyramid (confidential):

Jane Elliott 673-7872

Intercessors:

On a Sunday, just fill out a card in the back of the chair pockets or anytime call:

Jeanenne Gingrich 673-1355

Pastor:

Call Pastor Lois' cell phone if it is an emergency, otherwise call Margaret in the church office 673-5858 (at night you can leave a message and we will get it the following day.)

What happens when you are gone for vacation or some other reason?

The Discipleship Coordinator has a list of people who have indicated a heart for this ministry, but were unable to attend the training for one reason or another. Ask the Discipleship Coordinator for one of their names and train them on how you care for your people. Walk through it with them and disciple them to cover for you while you are away.

What happens when you are sick one Sunday?

You can pick up the list early in the following week, and just make calls. If you are unable to get to it before late in the week, the Discipleship Coordinator will be calling to check on you and will ask one of the backups to help cover your list that week.

What happens when the list is just too big for me to handle?

First, rejoice that God has grown us to the point you have more than you can do! We want to be sure that those representing our caring in our church are people who are full of faith, the Holy Spirit and wisdom. You have two choices. You may either prayerfully choose someone from your list you would like to recommend asking the Discipleship Coordinator to approve the choice. The other option is to ask the Discipleship Coordinator for one of the backup people to train. You would then disciple them and the Discipleship Coordinator would split the list between the two of you.

What happens if you can no longer continue?

Let the Discipleship Coordinator know. Please allow enough time for one of the backup people to be trained to cover your area.

How do we care for you?

By Wednesday of each week, you normally would have turned in your card with your list to the office. If it is not there, Thursday and Friday the Discipleship Chair will be looking for

you to see if you are alright. If it is there, there is a place on the back of the card for you to list the needs of you and your family. The Discipleship Chair will be following up on those needs.

GROWING TOGETHER

There is still a lot we can learn about how to do this better.

We could wait until we have all the details worked out to begin the program, but then we would never begin. There will always be things we learn as our Circuit Riders begin to do their ministry. We welcome these as a growing edge for us as a body of Christ and as a family of God. As we learn and grow, God will be able to trust us with even more of His most precious asset, His people. Let's look forward to each of the ways God uses to do that. As we learn more, we will share new versions of this information with you. If you need help or support with any aspect of this, please contact the Discipleship Coordinator or the pastor so we can grow with you.

Thank you for your willingness to be in ministry together!

Visitors/Prospects Questions

(You get to pick the most appropriate)

Did you get a gift mug?

What brought you to our church?

How can we be a blessing to you?

What did you like best about our church?

What did you notice as a first time visitor that we might be missing?